

the base, assuming that John Q. had gotten a ride back with someone else, or that he would contact them and ask for a lift.

Unfortunately, they were mistaken. At 0420, police had responded to a train hitting a pedestrian about nine-tenths of a mile from the nightclub. That pedestrian turned out to be John Q. According to reports, he had a BAC of 0.20.


What lessons were learned from this tragedy? Individuals assume responsibility for their own actions when they decide to drink. Always use the buddy system. 



photo composite

Another Wasted Life

By Ken Testorff,
Naval Safety Center

It was New Year's Eve, and a small group of friends had gathered to celebrate. Among the partyers was a 42-year-old lieutenant commander who had had too much to drink.

In the course of the evening, he had stepped outside several times to smoke a cigarette. When party guests realized they hadn't seen him for a spell, they looked outside for him but to no avail. They then searched the neighborhood but again were unsuccessful. They felt certain he had left the party on foot because they found the keys to his rental car and hotel room on a table in the house.

About 0022, a motorist called 911 to report seeing a man staggering along the right shoulder of an interstate about five and one-third miles from the house. Before anyone could respond to this call, another motorist, returning home from work, encountered the man. She was driving about 60 mph when he suddenly appeared directly in front of her car, a compact sedan. Despite her evasive actions, the right front bumper of her car hit the man, and he came flying through the passenger side of the windshield.

Paramedics pronounced the victim dead at the scene at 0050. An autopsy report showed a blood-alcohol content of 0.15 percent. According to the statement of one witness, the victim was feeling depressed about an impending divorce and may have been taking anti-inflammatory medications for a back injury the day of the mishap. Compounding the problem was the fact the victim reportedly had only four hours of sleep in the 24 hours before the mishap. He also was wearing black clothing at the time he stepped in front of the car.

As the OinC of a shipboard military department, the victim and his assigned personnel, according to superiors, were consistently counseled about responsible drinking in off-duty activities. It would appear he perhaps missed some of the counseling sessions. In any event, the bottom line is the same—another wasted life. 